

COVID-19 and death rates. A study coordinated by Trento based FBK

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The research led by epidemiologist Stefano Merler was published in the scientific journal Eurosurveillance

(v.l.) A new study coordinated by epidemiologist [Stefano Merler](#) with **Trento based Fondazione Bruno Kessler**, published in the scientific journal **Eurosurveillance**, has defined the mortality rates linked to SARS-CoV-2 infection in relation to age, sex, other preexisting conditions and the period in which the infection itself occurred.

For the analysis, conducted **in cooperation with Lombardy Region health institutions and universities in Milan and the United States**, **5,484** Lombardy residents were monitored over time, that had had close contact with confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection from February to April 2020. Of these, 2,824 developed the infection and 62 died with a diagnosis of COVID-19.

The study showed an extremely high probability of death from SARS-CoV-2 infection among older adults: 10.5% in the over 70s and 18.35% in the over 80s. Mortality rates in the younger age groups was much lower: 0.43% in the under 70s, with 0 deaths observed in the under 50 population studied.

However, the mortality rate not always remained the same: important differences were found between those who had become infected before March 16 or after this date, especially in the elderly. In the over 80s, the chance of death was 30.43% before March 16 and 8.14% after that date.

“This shows”, Merler explained “that mortality from SARS-CoV-2 can be extremely high during a phase when the health system is highly strained”.

The research also showed that **mortality rate is lower in women than in men:** 1.81% in females and 2.7% in males. “The reasons for this”, Merler specified, “are still to be identified”.

The study also highlighted that 82.3% of the deceased suffered from previous cardiovascular diseases, such as hypertension or hypercholesterolemia.

“These results”, Merler stressed “show that mortality associated with COVID-19 is very high, much greater than that associated with the flu, especially in the elderly. In fact, according to the national serological study that has just been made public, about 1,500,000 people in Italy have been infected to date, equal to 2.5% of the population, and we have had a very high number of deaths in proportion to it: over 35,000 confirmed ones. ”

“These results”, Merler concluded, “should prompt us to follow the instructions we are given to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19. We cannot afford to go back to the levels of February and March, where mortality was even greater due to the strain on the health system.”

FBK researchers **Piero Poletti, Filippo Trentini, Giorgio Guzzetta, Valentina Marziano** also participated in the study.

Please follow link to the study: <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.31.2001383?Emailalert=true>

PERMALINK

<https://magazine.fbk.eu/en/news/covid-19-and-death-rates-a-study-coordinated-by-trento-based-fbk/>

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